SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

No. 30 (2/1992)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION, 1992

In his annual report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization (A/47/1), the Secretary-General drew attention to the significance of the social concerns of the United Nations. He pointed out that, with the end of the bipolar era and the opening of a new chapter in history, States saw the United Nations once again as an instrument capable of maintaining international peace and security, of advancing justice and human rights and of achieving, in the words of the Charter, "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". The dominant theme of his report was that the current international situation required an Organization capable of dealing comprehensively with the economic, social, environmental and political dimensions of human development.

The Secretary-General reported that many hopeful areas of consensus were already visible to indicate an embryonic pattern of global partnership for development. Democratic structures, popular participation and observance of human rights were being widely recognized as sources of creativity in the process of development. Above all, a new vision of development was gradually emerging. Development was increasingly becoming a people-centred process whose ultimate goal must be the improvement of the human condition. Viewed thus, development was a global goal, since the need to strike a balance between social equity and economic growth was near universal. That was even more so in 1992 than earlier because both the industrialized and the developing countries were faced with equally demanding tasks: poverty alleviation for many among the former and recovery from economic stagnation for many among the latter.

It was essential that the United Nations continued to serve as a forum for the analysis and conceptual formulation of socio-economic problems of particular concern to the developing countries and those in transition to more open economic and political systems. It was clear that the Organization's responsibilities and commitments in the political and security area should not be carried out at the expense of its responsibilities in the development field, and neither should be subordinated to the other. It was essential that they be pursued in an integrated, mutually supporting way.

As in the past, the United Nations continued to be an important source for putting forward new approaches and promoting consensus. Many ideas originating at the United Nations, and considered too radical at the time, were major conceptual advances, and were eventually adopted as viable policy options by the international community. Examples included the concept of "adjustment with a human face" of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Secretary-General believed that the current concerns for humanizing development would also become an accepted basis for infusing new life into the socio-economic sectors of the work of the Organization. The United Nations had an obligation to put its weight behind those who were most seriously under-privileged and to address the root causes of the economic decline that still characterized

Published by United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria

the situation of many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and was fast reaching crisis proportions in several of them. It was unacceptable that absolute poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and hopelessness should be the lot of one fifth of the world's population. The economic situation in Africa was of particular concern. Most Africans were poorer at the beginning of the 1990s than they were when their countries achieved independence in the late 1950s and 1960s. Africa was the only low-income region in the world where the number of people living in poverty was, if the current trends continued, likely to increase by the year 2000. The freshly witnessed momentum for political pluralism in Africa could hardly withstand a continuing assault by desertification, famine and deprivation. Poverty was infertile soil for democracy.

An integrated approach to the wide range of issues faced by the Organization, in sum "an agenda for development", could only be promoted through a stronger United Nations, which had to become an Organization which viewed its objectives in respect of economic and social cooperation and development with the same sense of responsibility and urgency as its commitments in the political and security areas. It was in that context that the Secretary-General warmly welcomed the proposal to convene a world summit for social development in 1995. He was confident that the summit would provide leadership at the highest level for a shared worldwide commitment to put people at the centre of development and international cooperation. It would also surely act as a source of inspiration for new ideas and proposals towards the development of a more comprehensive approach to actions of the United Nations system in the social sphere.

Traditionally, United Nations social development activities had concentrated primarily on the most vulnerable groups. In the emerging trend to view the social and economic dimensions of development in a more integrated way, the Organization was also beginning to take a closer look at specific phenomena affecting social cohesion Once again there were much larger areas of mutually shared concerns among both the developed and developing countries than had been hitherto recognized. The degrees of social cohesion and the levels of development did not necessarily coincide.

The demographic trends in some developed countries indicated that, in the future, a larger number of dependent people was likely to have to be supported by a smaller workforce. Among the developing countries, the very efforts at modernization were tugging at the traditions and institutions which held the social fabric together. As societies at different levels of development coped with increasing pressures on basic social structures, like the family unit, their exposure to the media became an additional factor for adaptation. Issues of cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity were so closely related to the prospects of political stability and economic advancement that the involvement of the United Nations in the area of social development was acquiring a qualitatively different nature.

A particular emphasis in the Organization's work over the past year had been given to promoting the full participation of women in the development process by helping devise policies that facilitated their access to the basic tools of production, credit and technology and enabled them to share in the decision-making process. Efforts had been made to address the problems of discrimination and poverty affecting both rural and urban women, and to bridge the gap between equality de jure and de facto by increasing the awareness of women's legal rights. Considerable progress had been registered in developing a draft declaration on the issue of violence against women. Preparations were already under way for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace to be held at Beijing in 1995 to review progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking trategies for the Advancement of Women.*

---

* Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap I, sect. A.

The integration of vulnerable groups into the mainstream of development efforts was a valid goal in itself, but it also served as a guarantee of social peace and political stability. The promotion of respect for minority rights and the designation of 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People would create the necessary impetus to address their concerns. In addition, the United Nations was fostering awareness in developed and developing countries of the need to integrate the elderly and persons with disabilities into a productive social life.

One major development in the last year had been the worldwide mobilization of support for the implementation of the commitments adopted by the World Summit for Children. The Declaration endorsed by the Summit, which had been signed in September 1992 by some 140 heads of State or Government, set goals, through which the lives of some 50 million children could be saved by the decade's end and the lives of millions more improved. Over 130 countries had prepared or were in the process of developing national programmes of action detailing their strategies to achieve these goals. UNICEF was mobilizing analytical and operational capacity from a wide range of United Nations organizations in support of these efforts, which were focused on a broad range of issues, including health, basic education, nutrition, water and sanitation and the rights of women and children. Non-governmental organizations and the private sector had also been actively involved.

The protection of vulnerable groups was only one aspect of the commitment of the United Nations to human rights in general. Human rights were an essential component of sustainable development. Sustainable development was not possible without respect for human rights. Human rights were meaningless in an environment of poverty and deprivation. In the efforts of the United Nations to build a culture of human rights, it was necessary not to forget the importance of human rights workers and non-governmental organizations or the courage shown by many who risked their lives and security for the rights of others. Those who worked in the field understood that development provided the foundation for human rights advances, and that, equally, human rights were the key which unlocked energies of people so central to economic progress.

Respect for human rights was also clearly important in order to maintain international peace and security and to achieve social and economic development. In turn, without development, long-term enjoyment of human rights and democracy would prove illusory and war, of course, was the antithesis of both. Good governance, democracy, participation, an independent judiciary, the rule of law, and civil peace created conditions necessary to economic progress. Increasingly, each area of the Organization saw the relevance of human rights in its own objectives and programmes. The

Contents

	Page
Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, 1992	1
World Summit for Social Development	4
Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Guiding Principles	6
Support for Cooperatives	9
Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future	11
Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Social Consequences of Population Growth and Changing Social Conditions, with Particular Emphasis on the Family	15
News from Governments	18
News from the United Nations	23
News from universities and research institutions	28
Recent and forthcoming meetings	30
Editor's Note	32

READEX
RICHR

Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, which would take place in 1993, would bring together world leaders at the highest level. It was anticipated that the Conference would reaffirm the need for the full implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, together with civil and political rights, and to reaffirm the link between development and the enjoyment of all human rights.

In conclusion the Secretary-General pointed out that the United Nations was of particular significance to the developing countries. It had a crucial responsibility to monitor economic and social trends that might become sources of political tensions, violence and repression. Stark poverty, economic deprivation, political denial and social alienation provided little nourishment for the growth of democracy. Preserving the moral authority of the United Nations required the fullest consultation, participation and engagement of all States, large and small, in the work of the United Nations. That in turn required the empowerment of people in civil society, providing help where it was needed by supporting indigenous communities, non-governmental organizations, citizens' groups and the private sector.

WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

During the second half of 1992 further progress was made in realizing the proposals for holding a world summit for social development that were summarized in the last issue of this *Newsletter* (No. 29, (1/1992). The tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, convened at Jakarta from 1 to 6 September 1992, expressed support for a world summit for social development. At its forty-seventh session the General Assembly considered the report of the consultations carried out by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the possiblity of convening a world summit for social development (E/1992/80, annex), which had been requested by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1991/230. Also at its forty-seventh session the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/92 of 16 December 1992, entitled "Convening a world summit for social development".

In the preamble to that resolution, the General Assembly recalled its resolution 45/199 of 21 December 1990, in which it had adopted the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, one of whose principal themes was the need to strengthen the mutually reinforcing relationship between economic growth and human welfare. In its resolution 47/92 the Assembly also recalled its resolution 42/125 of 7 December 1987 by which it endorsed the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future.*

Conscious that increased international cooperation for economic and social development would significantly contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security, the General Assembly was convinced of the need for the enhancement of the social component of sustainable development to achieve economic growth with social justice. It reaffirmed the right and responsibility of each State to determine freely its own priorities, policies and objectives for social development in accordance with its constitutional and legal systems and social conditions. The Assembly was conscious of the need to address ways and means for the elimination of widespread poverty and the full enjoyment of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as interrelated goals. Stressing the fact that poverty, unemployment and social integration were closely interrelated in all societies, and had a particularly profound impact on developing countries, it acknowledged the need for an integrated approach in the fields of social

* Adopted by the Interregional Consultation in Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, held at Vienna in September 1987. The Guiding Principles were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/125 of 7 December 1987, and their validity was reaffirmed in resolution 44/65 of 8 December 1989 and in resolution 46/90 of 16 December 1991. The text of the Guiding Principles was published in English, French and Spanish in the form of a booklet (DPI/938). It was also included in an issue of the Social Development Newsletter (vol. 1987-1, No. 25). A German version was prepared by the Department of Public Information. Versions in all the official languages are contained in document E/CONF.80/10.

and economic development in the United Nations system to deploy more effectively the widespread experience of the system in those areas. Consequently, it was convinced that a world summit for social development should contribute to efforts by all countries to foster sustainable development and to promote policies against poverty and unemployment in all societies. The resolution continued by deciding to convene a world summit for social development at the level of heads of State or Government (although Governments might be represented at the ministerial or similarly high level) to be held in early 1995, and by accepting the offer of the Government of Denmark to host the world summit.

The Assembly decided that the World Summit for Social Development should have the following objectives:

(a) To further the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, as stated in Article 55, to promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development" as well as "solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems" with particular focus on social development aspects;

(b) To express a shared worldwide commitment to put the needs of people at the centre of development and of international cooperation as a major priority of international relations;

(c) To stimulate international cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, through governmental, private and non-governmental initiatives, in order to assist in the implementation of nationally appropriate, effective and efficient social policies and to formulate strategies which enable all citizens to be actively engaged in those policies;

(d) To formulate strategies on goals, policies and priority actions that could be taken at the national, regional and international levels to address, in the different development realities, core issues of shared universal concern in the field of social development, giving particular attention to the needs of the least developed countries;

(e) To create international awareness of and address the modalities to attain the necessary balance between economic efficiency and social justice in a growth-oriented, equitable and sustainable development environment in accordance with nationally defined priorities;

(f) To address, in creative ways, the interaction between the social function of the State, market responses to social demands and the imperatives of sustainable development;

(g) To identify common problems of socially marginalized and disadvantaged groups and promote the integration of those groups into society, highlighting the need for societies to equalize opportunities for all members;

(h) To promote programmes to ensure legal protection, foster effective social welfare programmes and enhance education and training for different groups in all societies, including the marginalized and disadvantaged groups;

(i) To assist in ensuring a more effective delivery of social services for the more disadvantaged sectors of society;

(j) To highlight the need to mobilize resources for social development at the local, national, regional and international levels;

(k) To make appropriate recommendations regarding more effective action by the United Nations system in the sphere of social development, in particular measures and policies for the revitalization of the Commission for Social Development.

The Assembly decided, taking into account the objectives set out in that resolution, that the core issues affecting all societies to be addressed by the World Summit were:

(a) The enhancement of social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged and marginalized groups;

(b) Alleviation and reduction of poverty;

(c) Expansion of productive employment.

Finally the resolution decided on the various organizational arrangements necessary to prepare for the summit.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The second biennial report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future (A/48/56-E/1993/6) was completed in November 1992. It was considered by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-third session, held at Vienna from 8 to 17 February 1993, and will be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session for 1993 in July and by the General Assembly at its fortyeighth session. The first report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Guiding Principles (A/46/414) was summarized in an earlier issue of this *Newsletter* (No. 28 (2/1991)).

On the basis of the information made available to the Secretary-General by Governments and by entities within the United Nations system it was concluded that, since adoption of the Guiding Principles in 1987, some progress had been made in respect of achievement of certain of the societal conditions set out in the goals and objectives of the Guiding Principles, and in respect of the situation in a few countries. In general, however, actual conditions had not significantly improved and in many countries had deteriorated, often reaching catastrophic levels. The areas of concern identified by the Guiding Principles were in many ways more alarming than in 1987; and implementation of many recommendations had encountered severe difficulties in spite of innovative approaches attempted in many countries. Although the validity of the Guiding Principles was still widely recognized, there was widespread concern that much greater efforts must be made if acceptable societal conditions were to be achieved within a reasonable period of time.

Analysis of global problems had suggested that a significant cause of their severity and persistence might have been an insufficient inclusion in societal strategies of adequately formulated social policies, sufficiently provided with the resources necessary for their implementation. There was some evidence that in all regions, and despite considerable variety in national conditions, there had been an important convergence in perceptions held by Governments, by entities in the United Nations system and by specialists, of the strategic value of social policy, and in particular an acknowledgement that there existed a need for an upward re-evaluation of its function within societal management.

A central challenge faced by most national economies was how to stimulate investment and bring into play unused resources, particularly human resources, in a sustainable manner. One means of meeting that challenge appeared to consist of directing a much greater part of resources to the renewal and creation of social capital and infrastructure, as well as provision of basic services and essential commodities. Thus, emphasis on the solution of social problems could be a major stimulus to the global economy.

At the same time, incorporation of social policies in strategies of societal management was a prerequisite to the achievement of many economic goals. The challenge was how to promote, facilitate and reward the contribution by all citizens - particularly by that significant proportion excluded from necessary opportunities and means - of their full potential for increasingly productive labour and for creative and entrepreneurial enterprise. The contribution of social policies was both to enhance the potential of such human resources and to help remove constraints upon its realization.

Individual self-confidence, equitable status, release from individual dysfunction and disadvantage, and stability but also resilience and flexibility in social associations, were all increasingly recognized as capable of contributing substantially to avoidance of conflict. Peace-keeping required both preventive and rehabilitative social action.

The transformation of human behaviour necessary to move global society toward full harmonization with the natural environment was likely only if adequate attention were given to social policy: sustainable development also required both preventive and rehabilitative social action.

Attention to the condition and status of women, the effectiveness of family and other kinship-based support systems, the provision of social security and social assistance, and the removal of prejudice and conflict between sections of society were all areas where social policy might promote and facilitate those changes in the demographically significant behaviour of individuals which were essential if demographic problems were to be resolved.

It was increasingly acknowledged that the direct and immediate costs to society of containing and compensating for individual dysfunction were very large, and exceeded significantly the cost of policy interventions designed to prevent or resolve such dysfunction. Economic inefficiency, political instability, civil war and international conflict, environmental degradation, and demographic pressure were conditions to whose existence unresolved social problems contributed. They were all extremely costly to human society and greatly impeded human progress: their resolution would bring enormous benefits to all. It was against those considerations that the costs involved in effective social policy intervention must be measured, given that that must be a prerequisite for their solution. Consequently, the solution of difficulties facing public finances by denying adequate funding to the social sector appeared to be self-defeating, contributing only to a rapid accumulation of problems inevitably requiring increasingly costly intervention from an increasingly weakened society.

Governments increasingly acknowledged that social policy must be given much higher priority within societal management strategies, but believed that success could be assured only if new emphases and innovative approaches were adopted. Some Governments, although not yet the majority, had shown a marked tendency to move towards treatment of social issues in a comprehensive manner, rather than in terms of their sectoral dimensions only. A major focus for integration in both conceptual and operational terms had been very clearly the family: measures directed toward that institution offered scope for much synthesis within social policy. Indeed, it was the central significance of that fact that had been recognized in the proclamation by the General Assembly of 1994 as the International Year of the Family, which, it was anticipated, would in turn contribute to better realization of the value of a family-oriented approach in social development.

There was very strong convergence in thinking among the responsible governmental agencies and concerned intergovernmental organizations, international nongovernmental organizations and specialists that an effective social policy contribution must comprise the following mutually reinforcing sequence:

(a) Further validate individual dignity and worth, and promote consideration of those who were disadvantaged or dysfunctional not as actual or potential burdens upon society but as unused human resources;

(b) Promote and support individual, family and community efforts to overcome dysfunctional conditions by means of strengthened social welfare services: the higher the levels of individual dysfunction, the more severe were the constraints upon realization of human resource potential and achievement of higher individual productivity, creativity and entrepreneurial effort. Programmes designed to generate income, create employment, and improve health and education could not successfully reach many targeted individuals precisely because of their dysfunctional condition;

(c) Protect and support all forms of micro-level association for self-help, including families and other kinship-based support systems and community associations;

(d) Promote, support and protect small-scale enterprises, including cooperatives, in order to provide a self-reliant and flexible base for local entrepreneurial activity;

(e) Expand contributory social security and complementary non-contributory social assistance programmes in order to prevent, contain or resolve individual dysfunction and breakdown in support systems;

(f) Promote an efficient, flexible and resilient civil society whose complex of institutions provided an organizational context wherein individuals might avoid dysfunction and disadvantage, realize their potential for self-help and solidarity, and protect and represent their interests;

(g) Promote effective participation of all individuals, freely undertaken and with full access to information, in the management of processes relevant to their own condition;

(h) Ensure accountability, transparency and efficiency in government;

(i) Improve rapidly and substantially the condition of indigenous people, and other ethnically distinct populations who constituted a major unused human resource in many national societies and whose creativity and experience in many fields of endeavour humanity could not afford to lose, by means of innovatory approaches within broader strategies designed to enable them to respond as equal partners to contemporary opportunities and constraints, and to formulate their own approach to achieving an equal but, if they wished, separate membership within multicultural national societies;

(j) Increase attention to culture as a factor of central relevance to social policy in order to avoid ethnocentric concepts not only in applying experience gained in one country to situations elsewhere, but also in applying nationwide policies to a heterogenous population;

(k) Strengthen the public sector in respect of information collection, evaluation of innovative measures and policy-oriented research; effective central strategic guidance, support and coordination; harmonization of different areas of social policy, so that advantage could be taken of the potential for mutual support between different measures and so that action in one area might not constrain that in another; and appropriate forms of regionalization, decentralization and attention to locational variety;

(l) Provide more effective and relevant training to social and community workers, and to other specialists engaged at the micro-level in protecting and supporting disadvantaged sections of the population, in order to establish subregional and local social development teams. Indigenous peoples and other ethnically distinct populations in particular needed such training.

On the basis of those conclusions the Secretary-General suggested that the General Assembly might wish to consider certain courses of action which might be taken by Governments. These included:

(a) Elaborate, on the basis provided by the Guiding Principles, in close consultation with all relevant non-governmental organizations and institutions, and with the assistance of the United Nations system if appropriate, a comprehensive national social policy as an essential component of the country's societal management strategies;

(b) Strengthen, or establish if none exists, a national council for social development in order to ensure the close partnership with principal representative non-governmental organizations that is essential to implementation of the Guiding Principles, and promote its active membership in the International Council for Social Welfare in order to strengthen international coordination as a complement to closer intergovernmental cooperation;

(c) Utilize observance of the International Year of the Family in 1994 as an opportunity for formulating an integrated national family strategy in order to contribute to achievement of the goals and objectives of the Guiding Principles;

(d) Include social policy components within comprehensive national strategies for dealing with drug and alcohol abuse; anxiety, stress and suicide; human immunodeficiency virus-acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

HIV/AIDS; homelessness; family violence, delinquency and crime; and other severe dysfunctional conditions;

(e) Give high priority to promoting and facilitating mutual interaction between efforts to implement the Guiding Principles and those to implement Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

(f) Consider extension of social security and social assistance as a relatively cost effective means of hastening completion of the demographic transition;

(g) Fully utilize the potential of social policy to contribute to the prevention and resolution of ethnic conflict and political extremism;

(h) Further promote, facilitate and support the effective participation of citizens in all phases of policy formulation and implementation in matters which affect them, making use for that purpose of the pertinent recommendations of the Plan of Action for People's Participation, adopted by the General Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 1991, and seeking as appropriate to extend its recommendations to urban conditions.

Also discussed in the report were the most salient recent responses in social policy to changing societal conditions, with separate attention given to developing market economies affected by society-wide catastrophes, other developing market economies, market economies being constructed from a previously existing socialist, centrally planned base and developed market economies. It concluded with a review of recent and current activities of the United Nations system which were consonant with or pursuant to the Guiding Principles.

SUPPORT FOR COOPERATIVES

Decision of the General Assembly

The General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, in October 1992, examined the report of the Secretary-General on the status and role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends (A/47/216-E/1992/43). The report had been examined previously by the Economic and Social Council, which had then adopted its resolution 1992/25 (see the previous issue of this *Newsletter*, No. 29 (1/1992)). The General Assembly, on the recommendation of its Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee adopted resolution 47/90, which was identical in wording to that of the Council, with the exception of its precise instruction that the next report of the Secretary-General on this topic would be to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session in 1994.

During 1993, the Social Development Division will be active in following up the recommendations of that resolution in close collaboration with other members of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC) (see the *Newsletter*, issue No. 28 (2/1991), for the functions of this Committee). During 1993 and 1994, the United Nations, represented by the Social Development Division, will assume the chairmanship of COPAC. It will also complete a study of the contributions of cooperatives to the social development goals set out in the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future.

Contribution of credit unions to social development and the work of the World Council of Credit Unions

One finding of particular importance in the report of the Secretary-General on the status and role of cooperatives was the significant contribution that the credit union movement was able to make to social development. The Secretary-General concluded that savings and credit cooperatives ("credit unions") had the most dynamic growth of all cooperatives: worldwide membership had grown by an annual average of more than 8 per cent since 1985. Savings, loans, reserves and assets had each more than doubled, with annual growth rates of over 20 per cent during the same period. Since 1972, when the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) first started gathering credit union

statistics, worldwide credit union savings and loans had both grown at annual rates of 15 per cent, while assets had grown by 16 per cent annually. Credit unions had a strong potential for mobilizing local savings and providing credit to members, particularly important in apparently capital-scarce conditions, thereby encouraging thrift and entrepreneurial activity and stimulating local multipliers. They appeared to be capable of making a significant contribution to solving the financial problems faced by the countries engaged in transformation from centrally planned to market-determined societal management.

In the financial sector of developed countries credit unions played a significant role: at the end of 1990, individuals who were members of member organizations of WOCCU made up between 35 and 45 per cent of the adult population in Australia, Canada, Ireland and the United States of America. In the Province of Quebec the percentage was more than 60. In the United States alone there were 55.7 million members, US$ 181 billion in savings, US$ 129 billion in loans, and assets of US$ 200 billion. Average annual rate of growth between 1985 and 1990 was 5.8 per cent for members, 12.0 per cent for savings, 13.3 per cent for loans and 12.3 per cent for assets.

In the countries of central and eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States a radical restructuring of the financial marketplace was taking place. Most countries were seeking large amounts of foreign capital, yet much capital could be mobilized domestically if appropriate vehicles were established. Elsewhere it had been widely demonstrated that credit unions could play an important role in mobilizing domestic savings, instilling the value of personal thrift, and reinvesting such savings in local communities through individual provident and productive loans. Consequently, with an appropriate legal and governmental policy framework, credit unions might be able to contribute significantly to solving financial problems. International assistance was available: WOCCU had been able to respond to requests for help by utilizing the diverse resources available through the international credit union movement. Assistance strategies, defined in collaboration with local representatives, were most advanced in Hungary, Poland, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. A workshop on credit union development in central and eastern Europe was held in February 1992 by WOCCU and ICA, in collaboration with ILO.

In many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, credit union growth had continued to be very impressive. At the end of 1990, membership in 75 countries stood at 11.7 million with individual savings of US$ 6,657 million. That represented an average annual growth in the period 1985-90 in Africa of 8.2 per cent in members and 13.4 per cent in savings; in Asia of 38.8 per cent in members and 85.9 per cent in savings; in Latin America of 14.0 per cent in members and 8.9 per cent in savings; and in the Caribbean of 9.7 per cent in members and 18.7 per cent in savings. The secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) reported that credit unions were well placed to deal with the social effects of adjustment on the vulnerable groups from which they drew most of their members. Well-managed credit facilities for small businesses from credit unions could stimulate self-employment and job creation. Nevertheless, in many countries cooperators felt that Governments maintained an unnecessarily paternalistic stance in respect of credit unions.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development reported to the Secretary-General that formal cooperatives, with their philosophy of self-help, self-responsibility and self-determination and their democratic structure, were the ideal means to achieve the goals of the Fund. The Fund focused increasingly on genuine and sound thrift and credit cooperative societies as the most desirable partners in assisting the rural poor, designing its financial and technical assistance for cooperative institutions so as not to distort their self-help character, but to strengthen their capacity for indigenous mobilization of human and financial resources and sustainable self-help efforts at all levels.

The Secretary-General recommended that the General Assembly might wish: (a) to draw the attention of Member States undergoing signifi-

cant structural adjustment to the benefits, in terms of mobilizing local savings and financing entrepreneurial efforts, of promoting and supporting savings and credit cooperatives; and (b) to recommend that they avail themselves of the help of WOCCU and other relevant international organizations in establishing them and in ensuring their efficiency and stability.

WOCCU is the principle international organization of credit unions and similar cooperative financial institutions, and the largest organization of a single type of cooperatives, representing over 86 million persons in more than 41,000 credit unions in over 80 countries. It is concerned with assisting its members to organize and establish, expand and improve credit unions and related institutions as effective instruments for the economic and social development of people. It serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, provides services for members, promotes membership development and growth, represents members' interests, and extends cooperative financial services to areas where they are wanted and needed. WOCCU has recently mounted a major initiative to ensure high standards of credit union reliability, safety and soundness. Model legislation, regulations, operating policies, by-laws and audit guides are being developed. Training programmes and technical assistance missions focus on implementing these practices. WOCCU seeks to persuade Governments that too much intervention can be counter-productive. It emphasizes the need for credit unions to define themselves as business enterprises, to adopt market rates of interest and to provide an array of services for an increasingly competitive environment. Recognizing the barriers women still face in gaining full access to the benefits of credit unions, WOCCU created in October 1991 the Women in Development Secretariat.

International Credit Union Day is celebrated worldwide on the third Thursday in October each year. In 1992 representatives of more than 86.4 million credit union members in 85 countries focused on the theme "Credit unions: A universal language". The "universal language" celebrated by credit unions referred to the following: economic democracy; ownership and control by the members; the self-help and non-profit structure; the right to elect board members and other leaders; and open and voluntary membership regardless of race, creed, sex or political affiliation. Among the opportunities provided to credit union members are a safe place to save and borrow at fair interest rates, the chance to establish financial control and self-reliance by cooperation with others, and education and counseling in financial matters, all of which lead to an improvement in the quality of life for themselves and their families. For millions of people in the world, credit unions are the only financial institutions available that provide such opportunities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN THE NEAR FUTURE

Selected topics: Local participation in policy formulation and implementation

The Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies refer to a wide range of topics in each of the main sections into which they are divided: "Areas of concern in developmental social welfare", "Targets and objectives for developmental social welfare policies and programmes in the near future" and "Recommendations for action at national, regional and interregional levels". In order to consolidate all the separate references to a certain topic and to compensate for the fact that many readers may not have access to a copy of the Guiding Principles, each issue of the *Newsletter*, starting with the current issue, will contain a summary of those sections of the Guiding Principles concerned with a selected aspect of policy action at the micro-level, that is action directly involving individuals, families and local communities as both beneficiaries and participants. The topic selected for the present issue is participation in policy formulation and implementation at the local level.

The Guiding Principles stipulate that in considering the formulation and implementation of social welfare policies directed towards individuals, families and communities at the local

level, the separate activities of a number of policy actors must be taken into account, as well as the nature of the distribution of responsibilities between them, and the means whereby their separate approaches can be harmonized or coordinated to ensure the most effective achievement of common goals.

The Guiding Principles note that one trend of special relevance to social welfare is the growing prominence of the concept of participation as both an aim of and a means to social development. Full and free participation on equal terms in all social, political and economic activities is an underlying principle of the corpus of international instruments adopted by the United Nations and has been emphasized in strategies adopted at recent international conferences, notably the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women * and strategies concerning the situation of youth, disabled persons, and the aged. The Guiding Principles support that trend and affirm that a basic principle and objective of social welfare policy is to promote the widest possible participation of all individuals and groups. However, greater emphasis needs to be placed on translating that principle into practice. This might be achieved through new partnerships in the field of social welfare policy providing opportunities for a greater involvement of beneficiaries, individually and collectively, in decisions concerning their needs and in the implementation of programmes, including community-based programmes.

In respect of targets and objectives, the Guiding Principles note that the 1968 International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare stressed the developmental role of social welfare, emphasizing its relevance to the total population, while recognizing its special obligations to disadvantaged groups.

Expressed in the Guiding Principles is general agreement that the central objective of social welfare policy remains the enhancement of human well-being by raising the level of living, ensuring social justice and widening opportunities for people to develop their highest capacities as healthy and educated, participating and contributing citizens. Developmental social welfare focuses on the maximization of human potential and on fostering self-reliance and participation in decision-making. Higher priority should be accorded to the developmental and preventive functions of social welfare, including programmes that stimulate self-help projects and encourage new patterns of participation in civic affairs.

Within the framework of national laws there is a need to strengthen the role and contribution of non-governmental and voluntary organizations, private entities and people themselves in enhancing social services, well-being and development. The Guiding Principles emphasize that social welfare is the concern not only of Governments but also of numerous other sponsors. Indeed, it is to communities and non-governmental organizations, as well as to Governments and intergovernmental organizations, that the recommendations of the Guiding Principles are addressed. National and local non-governmental social welfare organizations should be involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation and, when applicable, in the formulation and planning of policies and programmes. Non-governmental and voluntary organizations, trade unions, cooperatives and community and social action groups are major sponsors of social welfare programmes that must be recognized, supported and consulted. The Guiding Principles recommend greater emphasis upon local activity in respect of programmes supportive of particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged sections of the population.

The advantages to such a diversity of sponsors and approaches include the potential for a more precise identification of needs, innovation in strategies and generating broader participation and the involvement of more resources.

---

* Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap I, sect. A.

Greater diversification might result, however, in a need for better coordination of diverse activities and programmes and for a clearer delineation of areas of responsibility and function to achieve optimal effect. Non-governmental organizations cooperate with government agencies and often work within a framework of standards and guidelines established by governmental policies. Non-governmental organizations, and particularly community and local level groups, with appropriate oversight and support, could be entrusted with greater responsibilities for implementing various Government-sponsored programmes. Governments need to encourage further experimentation and innovation by such organizations in programme design and service delivery, many of which have proved effective in the past.

As part of its emphasis upon local responsibility for individual and family-oriented programmes in a community setting, the Guiding Principles make a number of recommendations concerning the decentralization of reponsibility from central to local governmental authorities. Responsibility for social welfare at different national levels should be clearly defined by Governments in the overall division of responsibilities and functions. National Governments have the primary responsibility for determining how overall policies are to be established concerning the setting of priorities and standards, determining the broad principles relating to coverage and eligibility for effectively administering centralized universal and other programmes, and monitoring programmes implemented by subsidiary levels of government or other authorities. There are, however, major advantages to decentralized implementation and to an appropriate devolution of authority, combined with close coordination of different programmes and services at the local level. The Guiding Principles perceive the granting of greater local responsibilities as a possible means of contributing to the solution of the widespread financial constraints upon provision of social welfare service. The role of Governments, especially at the local level, should be strengthened by the provision of adequate authority and resources to ensure effective implementation of relevant social welfare programmes.

It is noted in the Guiding Principles that a major obstacle to effectiveness is often the lack of adequate contact between those who design programmes and those who use them. Also noted is the remoteness of administrations from potential users, making both access and redress of problems more difficult. To overcome these difficulties rules and regulations of decentralized administrations should be simple and clear and should make access to programmes easier, especially to the disadvantaged and vulnerable. Programmes need to be emphasized that involve users in decisions, are based in the community and make use of local residents in their administration. Appropriate legal mechanisms should be established to coordinate, monitor and mediate in regard to the concerns and representations of consumer and beneficiary groups. The individual-, family- and, above all, community-oriented approaches, as well as the preventive emphasis, which characterize the Guiding Principles make it essential to consider the local level as the most appropriate for both formulation and implementation.

The Guiding Principles suggest that it would be suitable for the existing social welfare strategy of support and care to move further towards one of protection, rehabilitation, prevention, equalization of opportunities and positive intervention in order to assure the fullest development and effective social functioning of all. As part of such a strategy, family and community-based programmes and informal care need further emphasis. The appropriateness of institutional care needs to be re-evaluated in view of the potential advantages of the alternative, that is family and community-based programmes, which are preferable wherever possible. For this reason, special attention needs to be given to promotion of community and family viability, but this must be in the context of the equal partnership of men and women.

Thus one focus for programmes for the elderly should be on maintaining their links to the family or community. Special care, when needed, should be in a community rather than institutional setting, wherever possible. There needs to be greater awareness of the situation

of older people where traditional family support systems may be eroding, and greater attention needs to be given to policies that support families that care for aged relatives and to alternative community support arrangements when family care is not available. Community support programmes to assist disabled persons should, among other things, enable the disabled to live in the community, and support families and community groups working towards that goal.

Social welfare programmes need to give greater attention to delinquent behaviour and its social consequences, as well as to the effects of various types of harmful behaviour, such as drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse. More emphasis needs to be placed on prevention and on the rehabilitation of delinquents, former prisoners and addicts. This should be done, wherever possible, in a non-institutional, community setting. Programmes to combat family violence must be coordinated and multifaceted and include legal, health, social service and community support elements.

Local, community-based approaches are considered valuable also with respect to the carrying out of sectoral policy measures. Thus health needs, especially those of the most vulnerable, can be met most effectively when integrated with social welfare activities involving not only medical and para-medical practitioners, but also community workers and health workers suitably trained in prevention and promotion techniques. Health costs may be contained by placing less emphasis on institutional treatment and more emphasis on ambulatory health care and by using simple medical techniques in a community context, suitably coordinated with other welfare services.

In the context of efforts to expand educational opportunities, social welfare programmes need to provide more adequate links between the school, the family, the community and the world of work, so that they can reinforce each other. Fuller use needs to be made of the potential of community organizations, cooperatives, youth or farmers' clubs and women's groups to reinforce education or provide an alternative for those who could attend school or who drop out of school. The resources of community leaders, retired persons, students and social workers as well as the mass media need to be more fully utilized.

Although not referred to specifically by the Guiding Principles, such local and community-based activities, involving social workers, counsellors and community workers, are also important in other sectoral policy areas, including employment and income-generation, and in the policy areas concerned with the production, processing, transformation and distribution of commodities and the provision of services. It is at the local and community level also that social and community workers are able most effectively to contribute to the achievement of the goals of area-oriented measures such as those forming part of environmental or demographic policies.

The reader will recall that the Guiding Principles were endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly by its resolution 42/125 of 7 December 1987. In its resolution 44/65 of 8 December 1989 the General Assembly reaffirmed the validity of the Guiding Principles as "an appropriate framework for future action in the field of social welfare and development". In its resolution 46/90 of 16 December 1991 the General Assembly reaffirmed the validity of the Guiding Principles as "a major framework for action at the local, national, regional and interregional levels in the field of social welfare and development".

The Secretary-General, in his report on the implementation of the Guiding Principles for Social Development (A/48/56-E/1993/6), noted that progress in achieving societal conditions consonant with the targets and objectives of the Guiding Principles had been constrained in recent years by numerous factors. Although many Governments had attempted to adjust their policies towards the type of decentralized, community-based and participatory approach recommended by the Guiding Principles, there remained numerous political, technical, administrative and financial obstacles still to be overcome (see p. 6 of this issue of the *Newsletter*).

As part of its programme of work during

1993 the Social Development Division will complete a study of the situation, identifying both successful innovations in and major obstacles to the implementation of the Guiding Principles in a number of societal contexts. The views of readers on the matter would be very welcome, as would be detailed information on programmes attempted, particularly if they have already been carefully evaluated. Views and information will be made use of, with full acknowledgement of authorship or provenance, in the study, which will be published by the United Nations early in 1994 in English, French and Spanish. Please address remarks and information to the Editor of the *Newsletter*.

REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF POPULATION GROWTH AND CHANGING SOCIAL CONDITIONS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE FAMILY

The Expert Group Meeting on the Social Consequences of Population Growth and Changing Social Conditions, with Particular Emphasis on the Family, held at Vienna from 21 to 25 September 1992, was conducted by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat. Financial resources were provided by the Government of Germany and by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Population Division of the United Nations provided substantive support. The object of the Meeting was to assist the Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-third session, held from 8 to 17 February 1993, in examining the topic, which the Commission had identified at its thirty-second session as a priority subject for its in-depth consideration.

Experts from Australia, Egypt, France, India, Germany, Mexico, Portugal, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe participated and provided background papers. Background papers were also prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Social Development Division of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

On the basis of its examination of the social consequences of population growth and changing social conditions, as they currently existed and as they were anticipated to exist in the near future, the Meeting adopted the following conclusions and recommendations for consideration by the Commission at its thirty-third session (E/CN.5/1993/6). In the conclusions and recommendations special emphasis was placed on families, in particular on the various concepts of the family in different political, social and cultural systems and the economic, demographic and social conditions of the societies in which families live.

The Meeting concluded that the family played a fundamental role in fulfilling the tasks of procreation and socialization, which were essential to the survival of societies; in contributing to the economic well-being of societies and individuals; and in providing social and emotional support that was basic to the security of individual family members. It recommended that the Commission should urge Governments to develop family policies aimed at strengthening the capacity of the family to perform those functions.

The Meeting concluded that demographic, economic, political, organizational and environmental changes frequently exerted serious negative influences on the family. It recommended that the Commission should urge Governments: (a) to accord social policies - in particular those concerned with family-, kinship- and community-based support systems, population, and social and economic security - a priority on the national agenda equal to that accorded to policies in other urgent spheres; (b) to coordinate and harmonize policies affecting the family in order to resolve conflicts and avoid negative side-effects; and (c) to conduct as part of the initial planning of each project or programme, an evaluation of its possible impact upon families, approving the project or programme only if the results of the evaluation suggest that there would be no harmful impact upon families.

The Meeting concluded that the economic well-being of the vast majority of families, as

well as their ability to provide for the economic security of dependent members, depended on the health of the national economy and the distribution of national resources. It recommended that the Commission should urge Governments to balance macro-level economic policies, especially in countries undergoing structural adjustments, with micro-level policies to enable families and their members to participate in those adjustments in a constructive manner: (a) by training and retraining for productive roles in the newly emerging economic and technological environments; (b) by facilitating access to credit for small business enterprises and for entrepreneurial families and their members; and (c) by promoting cooperatives, self-help organizations and other forms of association as a means of extending the capabilities of families, utilizing organized mutual help, risk-sharing, and effective management of human and natural resources at the local level.

The Meeting concluded that, whether in developing or developed countries, substantial proportions of families, particularly those containing members with special needs, were unable to provide for their basic economic security, whether utilizing their own resources or market mechanisms. Redistributive public programmes were necessary to fill that gap. The Meeting recommended that the Commission should urge Governments: (a) to extend coverage of contributory and non-contributory programmes of income maintenance as a means of economic security for the elderly, single-parent families, dependent children, persons with disabilities, and the unemployed; (b) to carry out distributive and redistributive public programmes with complete equity in respect of gender, generation, ethnicity and other considerations; and (c) to institute mechanisms for carefully targeting non-contributory assistance and subsidies to families and individuals in need.

The Meeting concluded that economic well-being was neither the only nor at times the primary contribution the family as an institution made to individual members and to society. Performance of the functions of procreation and socialization, as well as the provision of social and emotional support to members, could be greatly enhanced when families themselves were embedded in supportive kinship and community environments. The Meeting recommended that the Commission should urge Governments: (a) to encourage programmes that contributed to strengthening kinship and community ties and to balance concerns for individual and collective interests; educational institutions and the mass media were important for creating awareness and promoting support for those values; (b) to remove impediments and to foster conditions conducive to the emergence and involvement of self-help and mediating groups as part of the development of civil society, especially in developing countries and in those emerging from socialist, centrally planned economic and political systems; (c) to complement voluntary efforts designed to make specialized social services such as health care and education accessible at the community level; and (d) to train and support workers indigenous to the community in order to enhance their ability to provide personalized services to individuals and families with particular needs.

The Meeting concluded that a large number of families were suffering severe human and material losses and were experiencing serious dislocation because of natural disasters, armed conflicts, and infringements of human rights. It recommended that the Commission should urge Governments to help organize a mix of informal and formal means of intervening in such crises in order to protect and support the affected families and individuals.

The Meeting concluded that a large number of ethnic groups and indigenous peoples were subject to discrimination and social conditions that were detrimental to individual and family functioning. It recommended that Governments and international organizations should pay urgent attention to the condition of those people and should support their efforts to achieve development, security, well-being, social justice and human rights.

The Meeting concluded that the participation of families and individuals in designing policies intended to solve their problems and in formulating plans for programmes that would directly

affect their interests and well-being could contribute significantly to their acceptance of the solutions and programmes. Such participation would in turn enhance programme effectiveness. The Meeting recommended that the Commission should draw attention of Governments and, through them, professionals involved in the design, administration and delivery of family and other social services, to the need to find ways to enhance meaningful participation on the part of those who benefit from such services.

The Meeting concluded that the economics of human resources, the influence of gender inequality on fertility behaviour and on the distribution of power and resources within families, and concern for human rights were compelling reasons for placing special emphasis on the status and role of women in society. It recommended that the Commission should urge Governments to further develop the necessary policies and educational programmes to enhance the status of women, to promote gender equality and to create compatibilities between family and work requirements for both women and men.

The Meeting concluded that improving the socio-economic conditions of families, providing for economic security through income maintenance programmes, and enhancing the status of women could contribute to the decline of fertility; however, the demographic situation in many countries called for additional efforts. It recommended that the Commission should urge the Governments of those countries to enhance and strengthen their policies and programmes dealing with family planning.

The Meeting concluded that it was important for public policies and programmes to deal with the problems of differentials in the distribution of resources and power along cultural lines rather than functional ones such as qualification, competence and performance. It recommended that Governments in pluralist States should pay more attention to the cultural contexts of policies and programmes and to discrepancies in programme implementation that often occurred along cultural lines.

The Meeting concluded that public accountability was the cornerstone of good governance; without it, policies and programmes remained empty shells. It recommended that the Commission should emphasize the need for Governments to develop effective measures to facilitate, monitor and enforce public accountability in the implementation and administration of programmes; such measures would include the introduction of a meaningful system of consistently applied rewards and sanctions, in addition to the provision of intensive training in the ethics and management of public service.

The Meeting concluded that the formulation of the policies and the organization and administration of the programmes mentioned in the recommendations contained in the foregoing paragraphs called for extensive and intensive training programmes, especially in developing countries. It recommended that Governments, United Nations entities and other international organizations should collaborate in developing those programmes with the help of specialists in the appropriate fields. Emphasis should be on both practical training in workshops at the local level and on advanced training in policy and programme development at the national and regional levels.

The Meeting concluded that, although an abundance of accurate, timely and meaningful information need not necessarily ensure the success of policies and programmes, the absence of such information would almost certainly result in failure. There were substantial bodies of information on a number of issues raised in the recommendations made by the Meeting, but that information needed to be organized in ways relevant to the formulation of policies and programmes. In addition, there was still a need for more information on all of the issues raised in the recommendations. The Meeting recommended that Governments, United Nations entities, other international organizations and research institutions should, plan, support and conduct a programme of high-quality policy-oriented research on those issues and that the programme should include: (a) comparative longitudinal studies; (b) the development and demonstration of model

policies and programmes; and (c) the development of ways of replicating successful policies and programmes.

NEWS FROM GOVERNMENTS

Russian Federation

Suggestions for a comprehensive strategy formulated in mid-1992 in the Russian Federation as part of a programme for further economic reforms illustrate well the nature of the strategic function of social policy in the management of societal transformation. As of September 1992, the programme was the subject of continuing discussion by committees and commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, and of further revision by the Government. Although it was not suggested that implementation of the strategy could soon begin given the current situation, it was felt that the conceptualization of the functions of social policy in economic transformation was pertinent to an understanding of issues of common concern among the Governments of countries engaged in constructing a market economy in place of a socialist, centrally planned economy.

The comprehensive reform of social policy was considered a prerequisite for success in respect of each of the critical factors determining the rate of emergence of the economy from its current crisis: (a) an expansion of capital investment, the demand for which must be stimulated; and (b) a significant increase in labour productivity. The reform would require a shift from a universal social welfare system to one in which the public sector concentrated on such carefully chosen targets as social security, social assistance, housing, health and education. Such a system would permit a reduction in the public budget, thereby allowing tax reduction. This in turn, if applied to private enterprise profits, would release capital for investment.

A shift from a universal system of social security coverage would also free funds for expenditures designed to increase labour productivity and entrepreneurial activity. Such a shift in priorities would facilitate the retraining and relocation of labour and the productive absorption of citizens returning to the Russian Federation from other regions of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. An active employment policy would stimulate a rapid search for new employment and a willingness to change occupations. It would also make available the funds needed to support more adequately persons made redundant and others in real need. This would facilitate a better realization of human resource potential and prevent social disintegration. Transfer to individuals of responsibility for satisfying their own needs would stimulate an interest in productivity, saving and effective investment. Public and private contributory pension and insurance funds would become an important source of capital for investment.

The priority accorded to the various elements of social policy would vary at each stage of the proposed economic reform. At the current "crisis stage" of reform, the most important tasks were those associated with social support for the most vulnerable groups. At the same time, it was vital to prevent disintegration of the non-productive sector and to forestall mass unemployment and social disaster. At the "recovery stage" of reform that would follow, the most important aim would be to create the prerequisites for the stable functioning of the labour market and the social sphere as a whole. For that purpose, it would be important to increase capital accumulation, for it was such savings that would yield funds for internal investment in private pension and insurance funds. In the meantime, greater efficiency in the use of public funds would be achieved, in part through the introduction of a purpose-oriented payments system involving social vouchers. There would be a gradual increase in the percentage of social services for which payment was required. Finally, at the stage of "economic upsurge", given economic stability and stable production growth, an increase could be anticipated in private savings, which would in turn make it possible to broaden further the application of the payment principle in the social sphere.

The main principles of State policy on the

regulation of private income - including wages, social payments and allowances - were to include the following: (a) stimulation of labour and entrepreneurial activity; (b) coordination of measures aimed at liberalizing private income, with the aim of stabilizing the circulation of money; (c) prevention of exaggerated differences between incomes; and (d) rejection of the principle of automatic indexing and compensation of incomes for price increases. The reform of incomes policy would be carried out in stages in step with the macroeconomic transformations taking place. During the crisis and recovery stages, substantial State regulation would be necessary. Compensation for inflation would be based on a regular review of minimum wages, pensions, student grants and social allowances. At the regional level, in accordance with the economic situation, inflationary tendencies and available resources, additional measures would be introduced for the benefit of particular groups to support real income with funds made available from local budgets.

Such measures were intended to limit the role of the State to establishing and refining a system of social partnership. Parallel to State guarantees in support of wages, the conditions must be created in which wages could be regulated through a system of freely entered agreements. The severity of the crisis made it all the more urgent to introduce social-partnership institutions to resolve labour problems and social conflicts. The Government intended to focus its efforts on the following: (a) enhancing the role of a tripartite commission set up in 1992 at the federal and other levels and improving the effectiveness of its work; (b) preparing indicators and criteria for tripartite agreements, including arrangements linking the growth of real income with growth in production and in the productivity of labour; (c) adjusting wages in the light of inflation and other factors; (d) consolidating the various positions represented at the tripartite negotiations with the employers and the unions, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the agreements reached; and (e) reaching agreement on negotiating procedures that would facilitate reaching essential compromises.

The Government intended to introduce a three-level pension scheme. At the first or base level, a social pension financed from the State budget would be granted, independently of work experience, to all incapacitated citizens not entitled to contributory pension on the basis of a subsistence minimum guaranteed by the State. The second level would be the worker's contributory pension, financed from contributions accumulated in the State pension fund or in self-governing, independent pension insurance bodies. Such pensions would be granted to persons who had completed the necessary pensionable years of work. At the third, supplementary level, would be pensions financed from private pension funds rather than State funds. Contributions might come from workers and their employers.

To increase the level of pensions for those who were genuinely unable to work, the Government intended to discontinue the payment of pensions to working pensioners and the granting of particularly favourable pension terms. The plan was to convert to more rational methods that would provide for a more rigorous relationship between the size of a pension, the age at which persons could be eligible and the total length of the insured period.

A priority aim, particularly during the crisis stage, was to abandon universal allowances and other forms of social protection granted heretofore and to introduce a more purposeful kind of support for socially vulnerable sections of the population that needed protection most. For example, the Government intended to abandon the principle of equal eligibility to State aid for all children and to adopt a more differentiated system of child support dependent on the material situation of parents. By the end of 1992, the Government hoped to have completed its work on measures aimed at rationalizing the system of allowances for families with children. From 1993, the size of family allowances would be linked to a scientifically determined subsistence minimum for children in various age groups and the income level of families; at the same time, income declarations would be introduced as a means of

verifying income levels.

Maintenance of income for the disabled was considered to be a priority. Equal importance was attributed to improvement of the system for medical and social rehabilitation and expansion opportunities enabling them to work again. In 1993 the Government intended to make State scholarships dependent on the average per capita income of the student's family. If the student had no family, the size of his or her scholarship would depend on the student's own income. At the same time, it would be useful to give all students the opportunity of applying when necessary for an additional scholarship that would be subject to later repayment.

An anticipated increase both in redundancy and in the number of people seeking work for the first time suggested that growth of unemployment would accelerate. It was probable that there would be 4.5 million unemployed by the end of 1992 and that unemployment might rise locally to as much as 20 to 25 per cent. In that situation the Government wanted to introduce an active employment policy aimed at stimulating a rapid search for new employment and the willingness to adopt a new profession. At the same time more precise and specific legislation was needed to protect citizens threatened with redundancy. Every effort would be made to find alternatives to massive reductions of the workforce.

In conditions where substantial migration would result from both internal economic restructuring and population exchanges between countries that were formerly part of the USSR, comprehensive policies were necessary. An important aspect of such policies would be developing migrants' initiative and independence in order to foster their ability to make their own arrangements in their new home. Funds received by them as compensation, credits or grants would have to be used rationally for that purpose. The current mechanism for coordinating and reconciling the interests of migrants and central government and local administrative bodies was rooted in the idea that placement of migrants should be directly linked to the economic development of the areas where they were settled. Thus, the organization of new types of production utilizing the migrant workforce had to be considered. In order to settle migrants more effectively, the Government intended to create a new mechanism for financing such measures that would provide, in particular, for the distribution of State funds not by local administrative bodies but primarily, via concrete settlement projects, by legal entities such as organizations and unions created by the migrants themselves. A controlling element in the mechanism for the effective utilization of resources would be a system of State and commercial resettlement banks, notably in the regions where the influx of refugees was greatest. Under such a scheme, only socially unprotected groups would remain directly under the protection of the Government.

The rate at which the Russian economy could emerge from the present crisis would depend almost entirely on the possibilities available for private investment, which were currently extremely limited. Firms were limited by high taxation, and the population at large by the very small fraction of income that could be saved. An inclination to voluntary savings had been constrained by the fact that the most important social requirements of a long-term character (housing, pensions, education and health) had been financed almost entirely by the State. In that situation family budgets had been oriented exclusively to immediate consumption requirements, and the accumulation of private savings had appeared to make little sense. At the same time, the limited ability of the State budget to provide social services had led to a catastrophic decline in the average level at which social needs could be satisfied. Available resources were in fact distributed more or less equally among all social groups so that rich and poor alike received the benefits in roughly equal measures.

Such conditions made it vitally important to introduce the principle of individual, purpose-directed financing as a means of satisfying social needs. The private savings stimulated in this manner would become, through competent financial institutions, an important source of internal investment. If State expenditure in the

social sphere were confined primarily to the genuinely needy segments of the population, it should be possible to reduce the tax burden on the profits of business, and this in turn would increase accumulation within the economy.

Accordingly, multifaceted reforms were essential in the social services. Together with the introduction of the payment principle, they would provide social guarantees even while taking due account of the long-term obligations assumed earlier by the State. Social guarantees for the poorer sections of the population could take the form of dispensations in kind (cost-free housing for the poor, cost-free local schools and hospitals) or of monetary or quasi-monetary compensation. In the latter case, it would be desirable to introduce a payment system based on certificates or vouchers for specific purposes, since direct monetary compensation, at a time when the standard of living was declining, would be used for current consumption of commodities. The use of a voucher system in various branches of social services was to be worked out in detail by the end of 1992.

Belarus

In September 1992 the State Committee on Labour and the Social Protection of the Population stated that there was still no comprehensive national system of providing care integrating the numerous institutions concerned. It was necessary to achieve better integration and to enlist more participant agencies. It was believed that help to workers should still be provided primarily by the enterprises at which they were employed. For categories of the population requiring aid in kind but not employed by such enterprises, regional programmes should be formulated and implemented. There should be two stages in the design of such a programme: (a) in the first, it was necessary to identify the set of first-priority measures that should be undertaken on the basis of available resources; and (b) in the second, long-term and specifically targeted social protection programmes needed to be devised and adopted.

However, before the programme could be implemented, it was necessary to establish an organizational and legal mechanism for providing such assistance in kind. A system for registering needy or disabled citizens unable to work had to be developed. Income level in comparison with a minimum consumer budget for each socio-demographic population group was determined to be the basis for classifying a citizen as needy.

Implementation of large-scale social security measures required targeted support for the groups most in need of them. This, in turn, necessitated a comprehensive database reflecting the specific situation of the country, which had not yet introduced a market economy and lacked appropriate indices for gauging situations not previously envisaged. It was not possible to differentiate among needy groups in terms of income because it was not clear to which social group disabled persons, young families, pensioners and other categories belonged. The classification scheme inherited from the former system had divided the population into the following groups only: industrial workers; clerical workers; collective farm workers; and general groupings as pensioners and disabled persons. What was needed, however, were means of evaluation based on a new classification scheme including, for example, housewives, hired workers, farmers, entrepreneurs and other categories.

The indices that did exist had either not been applied in matters of social policy or they had been intentionally oversimplified. The Government was unable to determine what percentage of the population was living below the poverty line and whether there were risk factors that might, within a short time, place those people in a situation requiring a particular policy response by the Government.

It was, consequently, of great importance to compile social statistics, including the micro-level. However, this could not be accomplished in a short time. There was a need to create a unified data bank covering population groups that required social assistance in general and in particularly difficult circumstances.

There was also a need, in compiling such information, for a system of partnership between the individuals in each of the groups singled out for special consideration and the State, public and commercial organizations.

Despite pressure on public finances, a comprehensive system remained in operation providing social security benefits and income tax benefits to all families (payable particularly to mothers but also payable, if appropriate, to fathers or guardians of either gender in the care of children) including payment of temporary work-disability allowances for the care of a sick child. Despite such allowances and benefits, families were encountering acute problems owing to the economic difficulties, the complex and underdeveloped state of the service sector, and flaws in civil legislation. Within the family itself a complex process leading to new kinds of relationships was in progress, often accompanied by conflicts between parents and children and between the spouses themselves. Divorces had increased: in 1991, 88 per cent had involved couples with under-aged children. Every year 10,000 children were left virtually without supervision because of drunkenness, alcoholism or drug addiction on the part of their parents, and 500 children ran away from home. Juvenile delinquency was on the rise. One of the most acute problems facing families was the housing problem: one out of every five families was on a waiting list for improved housing. Young families had practically no possibility of acquiring an apartment of their own. Only about 10 per cent of all young families had a separate dwelling at the time of marriage, and on the average they acquired a separate dwelling only after they had been married for 10 years and the time for having children was nearly over.

For decades the guiding assumption of family policy had been that measures should be linked as closely as possible to the needs of production, and that families should be assisted according to their needs and with a view to stimulating the birth rate. The result achieved had been exactly the opposite of the declared aims. Incentives to work had fallen, and an attitude of dependence had spread among certain groups of families. There was a lack of specialized services to provide comprehensive care and social support services involving such specialists as psychologists, sociologists, lawyers, teachers and social workers for families in solving their most pressing problems, i.e. child-rearing, family relationships and procuring material assistance.

The overburdening of family members with pressing domestic problems, the high level of employment of mothers in the public production sector and the widespread occurrence of material insecurity resulted in a desire on the part of families to have even fewer children. Family planning had not been properly developed, and abortions remained the basic birth-control method, leading to an increase in the number of under-age girls having abortions. The economic loss from abortions and the related gynaecological morbidity had been estimated at 5.4 million roubles a year. Some 15 to 20 per cent of all married couples suffered from infertility caused by abortions and the high incidence of gynaecological disorders, congenital pathological conditions and an increase in male sterility. The number of unhealthy children was increasing: 15 to 20 per cent of preschool children contracted a chronic illness, and by the time they completed school as many as 50 per cent of all adolescents were limited in their choice of a trade or occupation for reasons of health.

The transition to a market economy presupposed the creation of increased prosperity. However, the state of economic crisis, the status of women in society, the crisis experienced by the family as an institution and the serious difficulties faced by mothers and children indicated that the market economy and the transition period in particular might lead not only to an exacerbation of existing problems but also to the emergence of new ones. This would have a negative impact on the status of women and children and, consequently, on society as a whole. In addition, the decades-old and widespread State system, which was marked by paternalism, the philosophy of levelling by means of redistribution and the "protective" ideology with regard to women

and the family, had outlived itself. The dynamic changes taking place in society and its democratization demanded a new policy aimed at equality of rights, duties and opportunities for men and women in all areas of life and at the sovereignty of the family in decision-making as regards family planning and their economic well-being. In response to that need, a State programme of action for the 1990s to enhance the status of women and the family and to protect mothers and children had been formulated.

Considerable progress had been made toward diversifying and extending the institutional channels for provision of social and domestic services to the elderly and disabled. In municipalities, home services and social assistance departments subordinate to municipal social security offices monitored the provision of commodities and services by a variety of public and private institutions, including retail enterprises. They also provided direct social services such as home visits and facilitated interaction with public services. Industrial and agricultural enterprises and trade unions continued to provide supplementary benefits to retired or disabled workers as well as to poor families. On collective and State farms, 32 small boarding houses for retired persons had been constructed. Three residential homes providing full services for elderly persons had been built and ten were planned in the larger cities.

In the rural areas, where two-thirds of the elderly live (as opposed to a rural proportion in the total population of less than one-third), territorial social and domestic service centres provided similar services. Special sections of district social security offices organized the provision of home services. The Red Cross Society played a most important role, and other charitable and religious societies were beginning to provide assistance and coordinate their work on an experimental basis with that of the social security offices. During summer vacations self-organized students' organizations contracted with various of the institutions concerned to undertake supportive work to provide services in rural areas to the elderly and disabled.

NEWS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Development Programme

In its contribution to the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future (see the second article in this issue of the *Newsletter*) the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) drew attention to its own emphasis on "sustainable human development". Pointing out that delegates at the session of the Economic and Social Council held in July 1992 had referred to an "emerging vision of development as human-centred, equitable and socially and environmentally sustainable", UNDP noted that this "emerging vision" had come about partly because of an overdue realization by development practitioners that growth was not an end in itself but a means to achieve human well-being in harmony with nature, and partly because of the awareness that present-day levels of consumption and models of development had mortgaged the birthright of future generations and were therefore not sustainable. This "emerging vision of development" which the annual *Human Development Report* of UNDP and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had helped to shape, was being actively incorporated into the operational activities of UNDP.

The essential features of the sustainable human development strategy being implemented by UNDP during the latter part of 1992 were drawn together in a paper prepared on behalf of the Human Development Report Office by Keith Griffith. The analysis was based partly on human development initiatives funded by UNDP in Bangladesh, Colombia, Ghana and Pakistan that had recommended alternative strategies to achieve human development. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific had also contributed on the basis of its experience of UNDP supported human development initiatives in that region.

While it was recognized that national human development strategies must be tailored to suit each country's specific circumstances, it was agreed that each national human development

strategy should have the following aims:

(a) To be equitable in respect of region, gender, ethnicity, language and religion;

(b) To empower people, ensuring their participation in setting priorities and project implementation, and stimulating a vigorous civil society;

(c) To build coalitions to support human development, since current beneficiaries were likely to oppose reallocation, by empowering people's organizations and extending their access to information;

(d) To reallocate funds from ministries concerned with production and security (e.g. the ministries of industry, agriculture, commerce, interior and defence) to social services ministries investing in people's skills, health and productivity, and also to redirect emphasis within production- and security-oriented ministries to human development goals;

(e) To rethink the allocation of public funds in order to expand the narrow definition of investment as capital construction including key recurrent expenditures (e.g. shifting the priority from the construction of schools to investing in qualified teachers and appropriate teaching materials);

(f) To invert the pyramid of expenditure in order to allocate more to the base, where returns were higher, than to the summit (e.g. spending more on primary health care than on urban hospitals), thereby eliminating subsidies that reinforced existing imbalances, favouring small projects dispersed over a wide geographical area and encouraging local participation;

(g) To be multi-disciplinary, working on the complementarities within and between sectors (e.g. between health and water, as better health might be achieved by allocating more to the ministry responsible for water standards than to the ministry responsible for health);

(h) To lead to decentralization, since human development strategies were likely to be both more successful when public administration had strong ties to local institutions and less costly when responsibility was shifted from the centre, where costs were relatively high, to local institutions, where costs were relatively low and where community participation made results sustainable. Decentralization, however, should be accompanied by empowerment and accountability at the local level, since local authorities could be as dictatorial as central authorities;

(i) To correctly assess the costs of exploiting natural resources and seek environmental sustainability;

(j) To stimulate price changes and eliminate barriers to market access, so as to promote efficiency and the growth of human resources;

(k) To bring about structural reforms in institutions, property rights and entitlements;

(l) To increase national self-reliance.

Finally, UNDP pointed out that such strategies would cost less, that they would be labour rather than capital intensive, thus using less foreign exchange, and that they would require less foreign aid for implementation. If the impetus given to participatory development by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development continued, many development activities would move from being viewed as government programmes in which local people were expected to participate, to local programmes supported by the Government. The 1993 *Human Development Report* would focus on people's participation in all its forms, at the grass-roots or community level, in non-governmental organizations, in the academic community and in the private sector.

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) occupies a unique position in the field of development research. Established in 1963 as an autonomous institution within the United Nations system, UNRISD remains the only organization

of the United Nations system engaged exclusively in research on social development. In essence, the work of UNRISD is concerned with problems of poverty, inequality and discrimination, and examines how people's livelihood and participation can be improved.

UNRISD research programmes are designed to address major global problems of immediate policy relevance. Autonomy gives UNRISD greater freedom in the selection and treatment of research problems than is usually possible in an intergovernmental organization, allowing it to select themes on the basis of their importance without regard to political and ideological constraints.

Though part of the United Nations system, UNRISD relies wholly on voluntary contribution for financing its activities. In 1992, annual contributions to the core budget of UNRISD were received from Denmark, Finland, France, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Funding for specific projects had also been received from a variety of other bodies including the Commission of European Communities, International Development Research Centre of Canada, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, Commonwealth Secretariat, bilateral donors and various United Nations agencies.

UNRISD emphasizes a holistic, multidisciplinary and political economic approach in its research programmes, since most development problems cut across disciplinary boundaries. While research programmes are designed by a small staff at Geneva and external project coordinators, they are carried out in collaboration with national research teams drawn from local universities and research institutes, mainly in developing countries. Such work methods make a sustained contribution to the strengthening of local research capacities and institutions. UNRISD actively promotes the participation of women researchers from developing countries in its research programmes. Women constitute half of the UNRISD Board members and Professional staff.

UNRISD is committed to promoting research on key issues in political and economic restructuring, revived growth and a new world order which are associated with social development, but which it believes are being displaced from the policy agenda of the international community and national Governments. The concern with research on social issues corresponds to the increasingly acknowledged fact that social advancement does not flow automatically from economic and technological change. The impact of modernization processes and economic growth on various groups is mediated by social structures and the way in which power is distributed in society. The likely impact of economic growth and government policies can only be assessed adequately if social and political forces are understood. It is important, consequently, to examine decision-making processes in society and the social forces that shape policy.

For UNRISD, therefore, the field of social development research embraces not only traditional social policy concerns such as health, education, literacy and nutrition but also important issues relating to social institutions, social movements, conflict and participation. UNRISD is currently engaged in research on vital issues such as the following: the response of people to and the impact on their livelihood of environmental degradation and conservation initiatives; the affect of economic crisis and restructuring on the well-being of various groups within African and Latin American societies; the problems posed by market-oriented economic reforms and changes in property rights in post-communist societies; the roots of ethnic conflict and the dynamics of political violence; the problems inherent in the voluntary mass return of refugees to their home countries; and the socio-economic dimensions of the production, trade and consumption of illicit drugs. The Institute also continues to promote discussion in the field of social development indicators.

During 1991 and 1992, research was carried out in 66 countries. Responsibility for approving the research programme and budget of the UNRISD is vested in its Board made up of outstanding social scientists from Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, France, Ghana, Japan, Lebanon, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden

and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. UNRISD publishes a series of discussion papers on a number of issues arising from its research programmes. It issues *UNRISD News*, a newsletter containing up-to-date information on its research work, its research partners and other useful information for those involved or interested in its work. Numerous books and research monographs produced in-house or co-published with commercial publishers are available in English, French and Spanish. Research results are also disseminated through press articles and conferences and workshops at national, regional and international levels. Whenever possible, publications are made available to readers in developing countries free of charge or at reduced prices. Use is also made of the meetings and publications of the United Nations system to disseminate research findings to a wider audience.

For further information contact: Office of the Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Telephone: (41 22) 798 84 00/798 58 50; telefax: (41/22) 740 07 91; telex: 41 29 62 UNO CH.

United Nations International Drug Control Programme

In its contribution to the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future (see the second article in this issue of the *Newsletter*), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) pointed out that in a growing number of countries, an important factor mentioned with increasing frequency in the list of socio-economic phenomena was the abuse of drugs. Drug abuse had become a common problem, entrapping individuals and sometimes whole communities. Given the current situation the immediate future was likely to see an expansion, intensification and diversification of drug abuse in many regions of the world.

Abuse of drugs had a unique, self-perpetuating quality, making it potentially both the cause and effect of social dysfunction. It could be seen as a catalyst that aggravated the disadvantages of socially dysfunctional individuals suffering from such problems as poverty, chronic unemployment, illness, delinquency and crime, severe anxiety and stress. Such problems often led to disruption of a healthy family life, potential imprisonment and, consequently, loss to society of a valuable individual. Social welfare strategies could be rendered ineffective if due regard were not given to the abuse of drugs. A significant number of disadvantaged individuals could become dysfunctional, preventing them from taking advantage of whatever welfare assistance programmes existed. Indeed, the tragedy of an individual in a generally disadvantaged community, who was rendered dysfunctional and beyond the reach of general welfare strategies, called for revision of accepted social welfare policies and practices.

Broad, preventive welfare measures that were being extended to a growing selection of disadvantaged groups needed to include measures specifically tailored for individuals abusing drugs. That required the restructuring of programmes and an increased commitment by programme specialists of the related national and international agencies. Awareness of the new challenges had motivated UNDCP, in accordance with the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, to modify its approach to several areas of its activities. Many UNDCP programmes aimed to stimulate Governments to assume wider responsibility for the protection and support of people at risk, with an emphasis on family and community-oriented programmes. Demand reduction programmes accounted for approximately 25 per cent of the aggregate UNDCP expenditure on assistance in drug control. In Colombia, 14 of 21 approved UNDCP projects were focused on the area of prevention and rehabilitation, and were implemented in association with the Health Ministry, the Ministries of Education and Social Welfare, and other government agencies dealing with United Nations agencies. One project currently under implementation on a pilot basis by the Mayor's Office of Bogotá involved street children, many plagued with

drug abuse problems. Those children represented a particularly underprivileged social group, sometimes perceived as being beyond help. Nevertheless, dedicated local social workers, assisted by the UNDCP project, had succeeded in attracting a certain number of the children into a skills-acquisition programme, conceived within a broader programme of social reintegration.

Prevention education programmes, conducted through national ministries of education, were being strengthened in various regions in a coordinated effort directed at educating the educators themselves. For example, in the eastern Caribbean, a project was under way in which UNDCP was cooperating with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Its first step, successfully accomplished in the first half of 1992, involved preparation of a teacher's source book with a model of a prevention curriculum. The rationale of the project was to lead teachers from basic problem awareness to precise educating experience that would make them qualified to initiate a preventive education curriculum. The activities included utilization of the teacher's source book for the training of parents and guardians in the early identification of drug-related problems among their children. A similar project was under way in the United Republic of Tanzania in close cooperation with a number of non-governmental organizations.

The importance of drug control projects within the broader scope of social welfare policies could not be denied. However, the close relationship should be perceived in the much wider context of global developmental strategies, taking into account the whole range of economic, political, and other phenomena associated with the illicit drug issue.

UNDCP had provided advisory services to Governments in the field of strategic planning contributing to development and implementation of national drug control master plans. These had already proved to be an efficient tool in the pursuit of a consistent national, regional and subregional response to the global challenge of drug abuse. Master plans were developed and adopted by Governments in the form of single documents outlining all national (or regional) concerns and approaches in the drug control sector. They set out national policies, defined priorities and assigned national responsibilities for drug control efforts. Drug control master plans could also act as a reference tool for donors seeking to provide technical assistance or financial support to a particular country or region.

Within the framework of the master plans, increased emphasis was being placed on demand reduction, reflecting growing recognition of the socially induced attraction of illicit drugs. Poverty and social neglect figured high on the list of factors contributing to the intensification and geographic expansion of the illicit drug phenomenon in all its ramifications. That was true for all countries, from the poorest to the richest, as none was immune to the problem of poverty. Indeed, even affluent societies were affected by problems of drug abuse because of the inadequacy of their social welfare policies.

Master plans offered all countries, regardless of their level of economic development, an equal opportunity to act in consonance with or directly pursuant to the Guiding Principles of Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, which called for more emphasis "to be placed on prevention and on the rehabilitation of ... addicts", continuing that it "should be done, wherever possible, in a non-institutional community setting, with social reintegration and access to productive employment being major aims".

The usefulness of national master plans was greatly enhanced when they were based on the pilot plan developed by UNDCP in the course of its experience in providing assistance of Governments in the field of drug control. Subregional master plans were also prepared. In December 1992 a master plan for 11 central African countries was scheduled to be finalized in a joint project of UNDCP and the Economic Community of Central African States.

Efficient execution of projects dedicated to demand reduction at the individual, family and community levels required a major training effort. To overcome the shortage of trainers,

comprehenisve training programmes had received high priority. To be successful, such programmes had to be firmly based in the realities of field practices and local sociocultural traditions, with due consideration given to approved project objectives. A major obstacle to successful project completion was the lack of adequate contact between project designers and project beneficiaries. As a result, emphasis had been put on offering training to those responsible for implementing the projects, thereby incorporating them in both the decision-making and the project administration processes. Training strategies in the demand reduction field should be conceived and implemented whenever appropriate on a regional basis, with reliance not only on individual Governments, but also on international or regional non-governmental organizations with a proven capacity to deliver training at the grassroots level. Regional cooperation had also facilitated the introduction of innovative approaches to many of the typical prevention and demand reduction projects. In the central African region, religious leaders and chiefs of traditional rural communities had been identified as potentially important project-support agents.

NEWS FROM UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES

Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development

The Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development (IUCISD) is an organization of practitioners, scholars, and students from 60 countries who are active in the human services and related academic disciplines and applied fields. Founded in the 1970s by a group of social work educators in order to respond to pressing human concerns from an international and interdisciplinary perspective, the IUCISD seeks to develop conceptual frameworks and effective intervention strategies geared towards influencing local, national, and international systems to achieve humane, people-oriented goals.

The social development processes with which IUCISD is concerned aim to empower people to bring about economic and social improvement in their lives, often involving institution-building and structural change. IUCISD members use a social development approach to promote world peace and social justice, to fight economic and political oppression, to improve access to adequate health care and education, to overcome discrimination against women and minorities and to create sustainable social and economic structures. Above all, IUCISD is committed to people first in creating peaceful solutions to the problems of human survival and human realization at the local, national and global levels.

A biennial international symposium is the major means for scholars, professionals, government officials and representatives of international organizations to come together to share professional papers, exchange views, and work towards the goals of IUCISD. Sessions are held in accessible, low-cost locations to encourage attendance. Since the inaugural symposium in Hong Kong in 1980, people representing over 60 nations have gathered for IUCISD symposia in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1982), Canada (1984), Japan (1986), Finland (1988), Costa Rica (1990) and the United States of America (1992). The latter symposium was concerned with strategies of social development for improving the human condition.

Regional seminars foster in-depth study and discussion of specialized topics. Recent regional seminars have included the following: a series of conferences co-sponsored by the San José State University (United States), the Tunghai University (China) and IUCISD; the international Symposium on Peace and Pacific Development at Honolulu, Hawaii, United States (1986); the Scandinavian Regional Seminar on Peace and Development, co-sponsored by the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) and IUCISD (1987); an IUCISD regional seminar at Pátzcuaro, Mexico (1989); one European Regional Conference at Heidelberg, Germany (1989); and the European Regional Conference at Budapest, Hungary (1991).

The journal of IUCISD, *Social Development Issues*, is committed to the advancement of social, cultural, political, and economic theory, policy, and practice. IUCISD seeks by means of the journal to achieve linkages between disciplines, nations and cultures and is in the forefront in promoting issues that foster social development, social justice, peace, reduction of ethnic conflict, and intra- and inter-country harmony. Published by the University of Iowa School of Social Work and Southwest Missouri State University in cooperation with IUCISD, the *Journal* welcomes manuscripts that explore and describe alternative approaches towards overcoming the obstacles to social and human betterment. The *Journal* publishes selected papers from IUCISD symposia as well as research reports and conceptual formulations having an interdisciplinary perspective. IUCISD also publishes the *Consortium Newsletter* twice a year as well as occasional papers on topics of importance to members.

The IUCISD Technical Assistance Roster, upon request, links members' special expertise in international social development to Governments, organizations and social welfare agencies. Areas of expertise include the following: community and economic development; organization and programme building; education and training in problem-solving processes; and monitoring social development projects. IUCISD serves as a clearing-house for information on international social development and fosters collaboration among staff of organizations of the United Nations system as well as professional human service associations and institutions of higher learning.

Additional services provided by IUCISD include the following: mutual consultation and cooperative action on social development in such areas as curriculum development; faculty recruitment and training; international liaison among professionals with similar research or practice interests; conferences for educators, practitioners, officials and others; research and demonstration projects; and programmes to increase the decision-making capacity of local residents, including women.

Regional branches provide opportunities for colleagues to address social development concerns relevant to their particular part of the world. The regional branches sponsor conferences, share research and concept papers, and engage in collaborative efforts at local and regional levels. The European branch, with representatives from 14 countries, was formed at the Heidelberg Conference in 1989. In mid-1992, an Asian and Pacific branch was under development, and establishment of a Latin American branch was being considered.

For further information contact: Peter C. Y. Lee, Secretary-General, IUCISD, San José State University School of Social Work, Washington Square Hall, San José, California 95192, United States of America. Telephone: (408) 924-5800; telefax: (408) 9240 1018.

Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues

The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) seeks to bring into focus theory and practice regarding human problems of the group, the community and the nation as well as increasingly important problems that have no national boundaries. SPSSI comprises nearly 3,000 psychologists and scientists sharing a common interest in research on the psychological aspects of important social issues.

By means of the *SPSSI Newsletter*, the *Journal of Social Issues* and the series *Social Psychological Applications to Social Issues*, social and behavioural scientists are afforded a forum for sharing their knowledge and insights to the critical problems of the contemporary world.

In addition to its activities in public policy development in the United States of America, SPSSI has a task force on international issues, whose function is to help it undertake its work as a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and to keep in touch with members. News of United Nations activities is a regular feature of the *SPSSI Newsletter*. A new grass-roots task force is studying the experiences of SPSSI

in its involvement in resolving social issues at local, national and international levels.

Of the 2,944 members in October 1991, the greater proportion were in Canada and the United States. There were, however, 66 members in 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the Society is concerned to extend its international membership.

For further information contact: SPSSI Central Office, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1248, United States of America; or in Europe the representative of SPSSI to the United Nations Office at Vienna, Erich Kirchler, Department of Psychology, University of Linz, Altenbergerstrasse 69, A-4040 Linz, Austria. Telephone: (0043) 732-2468-224.

Suicide Information and Education Centre

The Suicide Information and Education Centre (SIEC), located at Calgary, Alberta, Canada, is a computer-assisted library resource centre specializing in suicidal behaviours. SIEC was established in 1982 to collect all English-language materials on suicide and make them avialable to caregivers, researchers and the public. The SIEC database contains over 17,000 references to items on suicidal behaviour, most of which are housed at the Centre. Each reference contains a full bibliographic description and, if it is available, an abstract. SIEC database access points include the author, title, source, date of publication and subject term. The SIEC Thesaurus provides a full description of more than 700 search teams that are used to access the database by subject. SIEC database subscribers have 24-hour direct online access to the database and are provided with a document delivery service. Current subscribers include educators, researchers, medical personnel and students from across Australia, Canada and the United States.

SIEC publishes the *Current Awareness Bulletin*, which highlights developments in the study of and resources on suicidal behaviour, and the SIEC "Clipping Service" (CLIP) is a monthly compilation of newsworthy articles and clippings on suicidal behaviour. SIEC "Information Kits" contain selected articles that provide a current and comprehensive overview of topics including adolescent suicide, bereavement and native suicide. Other SIEC publications include the *Youth Suicide Audiovisual Catalogue*, *Suicide in Older Adults: Selected Readings* and reading lists.

SIEC is operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division and is funded primarily by the Provincial Government of Alberta. As a result of a survey conducted for the World Health Organization several years ago to identify individuals working in the suicide prevention field, SIEC has contacts with a wide range of professionals in that field and provides services worldwide.

Working in close conjunction with SIEC is a non-profit service called "Suicide Prevention Training Programmes" (SPTP) offered by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division. Since its inception in 1982 SPTP has trained thousands of caregivers in Canada. The majority of the funding of SPTP is from corporate and private donations. Partial funding is also provided by the Mental Health Division of the Alberta Department of Health. SPTP has over 60 certified trainers in Alberta and hundreds in North America. The Workshops can be offered anywhere and at a reasonable cost to participants.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Global Welfare '94

The twenty-sixth International Conference on Social Welfare, "Global Welfare '94", to be held at Helsinki and Tampere, Finland, from 3 to 7 July 1994, will be organized by the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), the Finnish Federation for Social Welfare and the Finnish National Committee of ICSW. The Finnish Federation for Social Welfare, founded in 1917, is a national organization of non-governmental oganizations, local authorities, trade unions and local associations that promotes the development of social welfare services, organizes seminars and distributes information. The

objectives of the Conference, the general theme of which will be global welfare, will be to discuss, report and review the issues of social rights and equality in their local, regional and global aspects. Special emphasis will be put on the global allocation of resources. The aim of the Conference is to define a programme for the implementation of sustainable social development. In addition to the plenary sessions, parallel workshops, poster presentations and performances will be scheduled. Visits to institutions will be arranged for those wishing to become acquainted with Finnish social services. All participants wishing to present their work in the field of social development, whether pilot projects, intervention methods, practical examples or research, are invited to submit an abstract. Presentations can be in the form of papers, posters, videos, photographs, dance etc. Innovative methods of presentation are welcome. The deadline for submission is 1 November 1993.

The working language of the Conference will be English. Plenary sessions will have simultaneous interpretation into English, French and Spanish. Workshops will be organized which will be in one of these three languages only.

For further information contact: Global Welfare '94, Conference Secretariat, P.O. Box 63, SF-00501 Helsinki, Finland. Telefax: 358/0/738/123, or the ICSW Secretariat, Köstlergasse 1/29, A-1060 Vienna, Austria. Telefax: 43 1 587 9951.

Special events undertaken by the United Nations relevant to social development

From time to time the General Assembly has agreed to the holding of special events on issues of central concern to social development. The following are the forthcoming conferences, as well as international decades, years, weeks and days when special issues will be given intensive international concentration as a means to raise public consciousness and to maintain momentum in trying to deal with major problems.

Conferences

1993 World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna
1994 International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo
1995 Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, Beijing
1995 World Summit for Social Development, Denmark

International decades

1983-1992	Second Decade to Combat Racial Discrimination
1988-1997	World Decade for Cultural Development
1990-1999	International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism
1991-2000	Fourth United Nations Development Decade
1991-2000	United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse

International years

1993 International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples
1994 International Year of the Family
1999 International Year of the Elderly

International annual days and weeks

8 March	International Women's Day
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
7 April	World Health Day
31 May	World No-Tobacco Day
5 June	World Environment Day
16 June	International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa
26 June	International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
9 August	International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa

8 September	International Literacy Day
Third Tuesday of September	International Day of Peace
1 October	International Day for the Elderly
11 October	Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners
16 October	World Food Day
24 October	United Nations Day
20 November	Universal Children's Day
29 November	International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
1 December	World AIDS Day
3 December	International Day of Disabled Persons
5 December	International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
10 December	Human Rights Day

For further information contact the local United Nations Information Centre, or local offices of the United Nations Development Programme, or national associations for the United Nations. In cases of difficulty, contact the Editor.

Editor's note

All information in the *Newsletter* may be copied, summarized or translated into any language without authorization, on condition that the source is acknowledged and a copy of the publication is sent to the Editor.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in the *Newsletter* do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The Editor welcomes news items from readers. Short articles and viewpoints on the issues treated by the *Newsletter* are also welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit manuscripts to bring them in line with the requirements of the publication. Institutions and individuals who would like to receive the *Newsletter* regularly should write to:

The Editor
Social Development Newsletter
Developmental Social Welfare Unit
Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
United Nations Office at Vienna
P.O. Box 500, Vienna International Centre
A-1400 Vienna
Austria

V.93-82482-June 1993-1,700 ISSN 0251-6845 Printed in Austria